Hear The Sea

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/63481282.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Guilty Gear (Video Games)
Characters:	Chipp Zanuff, Tsuyoshi
Additional Tags:	Fluff, Birthdays, Prequel
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-02-28 Words: 894 Chapters: 1/1

Hear The Sea

by chippzanuffyuri

Summary

Having spent the better part of his upbringing convinced every birthday would be his last, Chipp made the most of whatever little celebration he could muster up for himself. It used to be just him, cheap booze, and the finest pack of cigarettes $10 could buy.

This year, his 18th, it all changed.

Notes

The title of this fic comes from Red Velvet's Hear The Sea

Happy (Late) Birthday, Chipp <3

Having spent the better part of his upbringing convinced every birthday would be his last, Chipp made the most of whatever little celebration he could muster up for himself. It used to be just him, cheap booze, and the finest pack of cigarettes $10 could buy.

This year, his 18th, it all changed. A soft, nudging begrudgingly wakes him, and he turns to his other side. “5 more minutes, Shisho... I’m not ready to get up…” Chipp murmurs as Tsuyoshi tries waking him up. Tsuyoshi sighs, though there’s a warmth to it. “You are not training today, boy. Now, up.”
Chipp groans, rubbing his eyes as he slowly sits up. He still isn’t used to waking up without the stench of cheap liquor clinging to his breath or the scratch of a half-burned cigarette between his fingers. The morning air here is too fresh, crisp, and clean—it makes him feel like he’s dreaming.

Tsuyoshi stands beside his futon, arms folded, his usual stern gaze slightly softened. “Well? Come on, I’ll let you stay in your pajamas, but you do want to celebrate, don’t you?” The elder ninja asks as he walks out of Chipp’s room.

Their apartment is small and not too far from where Chipp grew up. However, the city is still a rundown and terrible place to live.

Chipp stretches, groaning as his joints pop. *Celebrate?* That word still feels foreign to him. Birthdays were just another day to survive, another reminder that he somehow hadn't died yet. But Tsuyoshi—the stubborn old man that he was—had other ideas.

He shuffles out of his room, still bleary-eyed, and stops dead in his tracks.

The tiny kitchen table, barely big enough for two, is set with rice bowls, miso soup, and grilled fish. In the center, a small cake, clearly homemade and a little lopsided but dusted with powdered sugar, sits.

Chipp stares. “The hell is this?”

Tsuyoshi gives him a pointed look. “It is a meal. You eat it.”

Chipp snorts. “No, I *get* that, but—” He gestures vaguely at the setup. “Since when do we do this?”

The older man shrugs. “Since today.”

Chipp doesn’t know what to say to that. He stands there awkwardly, rubbing the back of his neck. He’s not used to things being *just for him.* Not used to people caring.

Tsuyoshi huffs, grabbing a pair of chopsticks and shoving them into Chipp’s hand. “Sit. Eat.”

Chipp hesitates for only a second before plopping down at the table. He picks up his chopsticks, grabs a bite of rice, and chews slowly. It's simple. Nothing fancy. But it's warm. He swallows thickly, suddenly aware of how tight his chest feels.

"Damn, old man," he mutters. "You really went all out, huh?"

Tsuyoshi sips his tea, eyes twinkling with something unreadable. "You deserve more than you think, boy."

Chipp doesn't respond to that. He keeps eating. Because if he stops, he might have to admit that those words hit a little too close to home.

For a while, they eat in silence, the only sounds being the quiet clink of chopsticks against bowls and the faint hum of the city outside. Chipp isn't sure what to say—what *can* he say? The old man had never been one for grand gestures, but this? This was probably the closest thing to spoiling Tsuyoshi had ever shown him.

He doesn't want to ruin it.

"So," Chipp finally mutters between bites, "is this, like… a thing now? 'Cause I gotta tell you, I'm not gonna start expecting birthday parties and gifts every year."

Tsuyoshi raises a brow. "Would that be so bad?"

Chipp opens his mouth, ready to say *yes; actually, it would be*—but he stops himself. Instead, he scoffs. "I'm just saying, don't go soft on me, old man."

Tsuyoshi smirks, taking another sip of his tea. "I will keep that in mind."

Chipp keeps eating, trying to ignore the strange warmth in his chest.

Then, out of nowhere, Tsuyoshi clears his throat. "I have something for you."

Chipp freezes mid-bite. "...Huh?"

The old man reaches into his sleeve and pulls out a small, neatly wrapped package. He slides it across the table without ceremony, as if he isn't handing Chipp the first real present he's ever received in his entire life.

Chipp stares at it. "You—you *got me something?*"

Tsuyoshi sighs, pinching the bridge of his nose. His movements are more out of a fatherly nagging"Yes, boy. That is what happens when people care for someone."

Chipp swallows, throat suddenly dry. He hesitates before picking up the package and carefully unwrapping it.

Inside, he finds a pair of well-made kunai, their edges polished, their weight balanced perfectly in his hands. Not cheap, not flashy—just right.

Chipp turns them over in his grip, testing their feel. They're not just weapons. They're *his.*

He doesn't know what to say.

Tsuyoshi watches him with his usual unreadable expression. "You have trained well," he says after a moment. "Consider it a sign of your progress. A ninja's tools must be earned."

Chipp swallows hard. He's never been good with words, and even if he were, he's not sure he could find the right ones for this.

So, instead, he nods, gripping the kunai a little tighter.

"…Thanks, Shisho."

Tsuyoshi gives him a rare, knowing smile. "Happy birthday, Chipp."

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!